

**REMARKS**

Claim 17 and 19-36 are now pending in this application. Claims 17-36 were previously pending. By this Amendment, Claims 17, 21, 28-30, 32, 33 and 35 are currently amended, Claim 18 is cancelled, and Claims 19, 20, 22-27, 31, 34 and 36 remain unchanged.

Applicants thank Examiner Alexander for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the June 11, 2009, telephonic interview. During the interview, Applicants' representative discussed a proposed claim set that was provided to Examiner Alexander prior to the interview. Applicants' representative asserted that neither of the primary references (Chan et al. and Kraan) teach or suggest the features of the pending claims, including a top part having a seal and being a monolithic piece of elastic material.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that Claims 21, 22 and 35 include allowable subject matter. Claim 21 is rewritten in independent form including all of the features of Claims 17 and 19. The features of Claim 20 have not been included in amended Claim 21 because Claim 21 should have originally depended from Claim 19, not Claim 20. It is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 21 is allowable. Claim 35 is rewritten in independent form including the features of Claims 32 and 33. As a result, allowance of Claims 21, 22 and 35 is respectfully requested.

The specification is amended to add sections headings.

Claims 28-31 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph. By this Amendment, Claims 28-30 are amended to obviate the rejection. As a result, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,935,222 to Chen et al. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 17 recites a top part being formed as a single monolithic piece of elastic material and having an outer seal. It is respectfully submitted that the Office Action-defined top part of Chen (water spreader bottom 9) and the seal ring 8 of Chen are not a single monolithic piece. (See column 2, lines 65-67). It is further submitted that there is no indication in Chen that the water spreader bottom 9 is an elastic material.

Claim 18 is cancelled.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Chen does not disclose each and every feature of Claim 17, and therefore rejection under 35 USC §102(e) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 17, 18 and 29-32 were rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,077,053 to Kraan. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 17 recites a top part being formed as a single monolithic piece of elastic material and having an outer seal. The Office Action states that in Kraan “an outer seal 36 [is] associated with the top part [34]”. It is unclear from the specification and drawings of Kraan what element is associated with reference number 36. Element 86 in Figure 3 of Kraan is a sealing ring, but it is not a part of cover 34 or even adjacent to it. Further, it is respectfully submitted that Kraan does not state that cover 34 is an elastic material. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that Kraan does not disclose a top part being formed as a single monolithic piece of elastic material and having an outer seal.

Claim 18 is cancelled and Claims 29 and 30 depend from Claim 17.

The arguments presented above with regard to Claim 17 also apply to Claim 32.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Kraan does not disclose each and every feature of Claims 17 and 29-32, and therefore rejection under 35 USC §102(e) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,935,222 to Chen et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,598,764 to Bambi. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 19 and 20 depend from Claim 17. It is respectfully submitted that Bambi does not remedy the deficiencies of Chen discussed above.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that Bambi does not disclose a push-off element bulging downwardly from the top part and being formed from an elastic material. Element 9F of Bambi is a screw and element 9H is a perforated metal disk, neither of which is described as elastic. In addition, screw 9F and disk 9H are not part of a monolithic top part.

As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Chen and Bambi does not suggest the features of Claims 19 and 20 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,077,053 to Kraan in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,598,764 to Bambi. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 33 and 34 depend from Claim 32. It is respectfully submitted that Bambi does not remedy the deficiencies of Kraan discussed above.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that Bambi does not disclose a push-off element bulging downwardly from the top part and being formed from an elastic material. Element 9F of Bambi is a screw and element 9H is a perforated metal disk, neither of which is described as elastic. In addition, screw 9F and disk 9H are not part of a monolithic top part.

As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Kraan and Bambi does not suggest the features of Claims 33 and 34 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 23-27 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,935,222 to Chen et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,561,349 to Endo. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 23-27 depend from Claim 17. It is respectfully submitted that Endo does not remedy the deficiencies of Chen discussed above.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that Endo does not disclose ribs with gaps, gaps that are arranged offset with respect to one another in the radial direction, or openings arranged in the gaps.

As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Chen and Endo does not suggest the features of Claims 23-27 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 36 was rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,077,053 to Kraan in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,561,349 to Endo. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 36 depends from Claim 32. It is respectfully submitted that Endo does not remedy the deficiencies of Kraan discussed above.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that Endo does not disclose ribs with gaps, gaps that are arranged offset with respect to one another in the radial direction, or openings arranged in the gaps.

As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Kraan and Endo does not suggest the features of Claim 36 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 28 was rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,935,222 to Chen et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,526,733 to Klawuhn et al. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 28 depends from Claim 17. It is respectfully submitted that Klawuhn does not remedy the deficiencies of Chen discussed above.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that the seal 17 of Klawuhn is not a part of a monolithic top part. In addition, Klawuhn does not disclose a plurality of supporting ribs for preventing an inside surface of the tab shaped circular lip from sticking to other surfaces of the top part.

As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Chen and Klawuhn does not suggest the features of Claim 28 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection be withdrawn.

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 17 and 19-36 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,

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